American Women Missionaries and Pioneers Collection

Part 1: Missionaries

The Irene Forsythe Hanson Papers, 1921-1980

Series I

Correspondence
(Incoming and outgoing intermixed)

Folder Description:

Correspondence,
December 21, 1926-December 30, 1926

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December 21. 1924.

My dearest loved Ones:

This is Sun Eve. - the second day of our week's vacation and I feel I must get some of the various things written before I get so swamped I can't do any of it. Let's see I left off telling that we'd have a Christmas party for coolies + a service. I'll begin there. Some one last told us that Chang Hsien Sheng ("Peasant") wanted to tell us a story the last a.m. so we asked him. He told such a good one - I fear I can't retell it but we did laugh so; Then at eleven the U.S. Infantry chaplain + vested choir led a liturgical service - Episcopal - It was very enjoyable. They sang "America The Beautiful" as a processional - Some thought

3 coming as trains were so uncertain. It is well I did for today's paper says all trains South even the Express to Nanking all stopped. I sent them a big box of chocolates for a taste. I know they don't get them there. Sat: a.m. we practised for the pageant - three scenes of Christmas story - the shepherds, Herod & wise men - & the wise men & manger. It went off beautifully. It was read in Chinese before each scene so the teachers would understand it. All seemed to enjoy it - one girl said from the silence one could tell they were - otherwise they'd talk outloud. Then after it we had a Christmas tree & Santa for the Chinese children & gave each a stocking with

21 it not most fitting but it thrilled me so — the way "The Star-Spangled Banner used to during the war — The choir was good as was the soloist The chaplain did give the best sermon — short but plain + without catering to this or that element he just preached Christ crucified as the only solution. used these verses Isa 44:15 — "of the residue he maketh a god" He surely pointed out the way of too many I fear — living all to themselves + then in a tight place of residue make a god or give that residue to god. It was a bit plain for a few to enjoy much — but was splendid. Friday P.M. we did not have classes but got ready for our party Sat P.M. I wrote the Yiddish folks I'd not risk

4 candy, toys, + peanuts, then had Chinese cakes + candy and tea for all. It was such fun! I don't know when I've enjoyed anything like it. The teachers were all dressed in their best silk coats + wives were so nicely dressed in bright colored silk coats. Of course we couldn't talk much - only say "How do you do?" + bow + smile. Chang's wife is still very sick so Betty + I sent her a box of French pastry - At the party Chang Hsien Sheng hunted for us + thanked us - it was worth it all. He had his only child a little son at the party + absolutely that baby is adorable. You never saw anyone pass thru a more adoring crowd than did "Hearst" - Every place he went it was the same. We heard again

5] after word that he isn't a christian. I wonder. It seems well if he can't see any difference between christians and others after these years of association - it seems we should see whether or not we may be failing in our living Christ. Too, tho, he is so capable and self-sufficient perhaps he doesn't see the need. It may be this sickness of his wife will be used to soften his heart. I'll enclose a picture taken that day of him & baby later,

Mr. Lee, the Student worker here who is so fine asked quite a group of us to a Chinese restaurant for a feast. and it surely was interesting. The former feast I described was very much like this - only

7] Presbyterians of Canada to get a field. It seems Parliament divided the old field for them at the split + simply cut all of the Chinese part out of continuing church + gave to United. Dr + Mrs. Goforth have been attempting to get an area big enuf for their board to grow + expand in but see China is all staked off by claims of this + that group + tho there are vast areas not at all well manned nor occupied - all seem loathe to give up their claims - They have been almost a year searching - They had had telegrams concerning the Ichoufu field near Yihsien that is was not a.k. but that may not be certain. Dr. Speer said it

We had sea slugs at this one. They were dark colored + rather long slimy pieces. I'll admit I swallowed mine rather quickly + without the prescribed mastication! I can't let anything go untasted tho! The fish here is so delicious!

Sun. a.m. we had our class + the Christmas lesson. Then I went to find Mrs. Gafouth. She had left the hospital + was boarding at a place. She + Dr. Gafouth were there + I had such a fine visit of 2 hours. They are just so sweet + wonderful. — Please don't say about this now in public or to anyone else — He told me a bit about the attempts of the Continuing

8] might look like retrenchment if we gave up. I'm not judging even but, if it is - & they can put in a bigger force & expand - as we seemingly can't - it would seem it would be best. - He said he felt in some places it amounted almost to denominational greed where the present force for example was 1½ persons to a station. Well, somehow God will rule & over rule & open His field I am sure. They are perfectly confidant too but it does seem strange. As I said don't mention this out - as maybe by the time you get it all will be settled & I don't want to be quoting anyone nor

9. passing news on which I am not authorized to nor perhaps understand fully! What a blessed visit we did have! Sun. P.M. we got Nancy off to Nanking for vacation - Betty was going to Hwai yuan but followed Dr. Goforth's advice to stay here - but she did go as far as Sintsin with Nancy. Then I was weary & just slept thru evening church service & got to bed early - never even heard rising bell in A.M. at seven. A Mrs. Gordon out in country from Peking asked me out but I decided I'd better stay here etc - I want to go later. Mrs. Gordon - his mother - was at Hsinsin a long time with

11/ the general + off he went!! We laughed much at her adventure.

Monday I hunted up the claw chang or soup kitchen run by Salvation army to proffer my services for a few days if they could use me. I'll write another sheet more about it → I've been there twice and will spend Christmas day there. I love to go but some of others here like to too so I must let them for it is a real experience. Jhurs.

I have been studying a little but there seem to be many errands and committee meetings etc that with the soup kitchen the week has been full! Last night I had a

a son who had to go home because of illness. It was sweet of her to ask me! Monday at 3 a.m. Betty came back. She had left Tientsin at 6 p.m. + been till 3 a.m. coming a 3-hour trip! She had quite an experience. Just for the fun she bought 3rd class ticket but it was stone cold so after several hours went into first class. Had good time trying her Chinese on a nice couple. They were so nice to her. Some general got off her train at Peking + there was a band down to meet him — as she said "down to meet her or a lesser person" — tickets were scarce and just as she got on it slipped

12) letter from Yitsien enclosing the annual report & it just did my heart good'. I don't know when I've enjoyed anything so much'; I've felt so ignorant of that place — but this tells so much about it & the wonderful evangelistic note in regard to each activity just made me so happy to have the privilege of being assigned there. I felt again the wonder & joy that I am called or permitted to have a part in such work. Oh'; I feel so little — & my'; what will be expected of me. Truly, the treasure is in an earthen vessel || that the power may be of. Him — I

13] am so glad for the last part of that verse because more + more we realize the "earthenness" of the vessel + the futility of our slightest attempt in ourselves to battle with forces of evil here - or anywhere — but sometimes it seems so overwhelming here — but praise Him the "power is of Him!" The verses for today were such a blessing — The Lord's rich blessing + promises to Caleb because he "wholly followed the Lord". Just a wealth in that. If we could wholly follow. Too, Caleb's reward was for belief + faith in spite of overpowering discouragements. Not for

15| Today, we had our Chinese lady Teachers here for tea. Such a sweet time we had!! They were so interested in all & very friendly. We had a long table with a little Christmas tree & candles - with a lovely big cake (the cook decorates them so beautifully) Then they wanted to see the rooms of all of us. We went to Mrs. Uns at last & had fudge. Then a girl & I sang & played the guitar. They then sang Chinese songs for us. We had such a good time! The Chinese custom is for the hostess to follow them to the gate & the guest

14 service particularly (lest he might have reason to boast & become proud) but for belief & faith. How we need it in face of what seems an unanswered prayer or a victory for Satan — It was my Christmas covenant with His help to truly strive to follow wholly — as in Deut 1:36 — the land which he hath trodden up was given Him — I asked that souls I meet in China may be given for His glory — To wholly follow — may be hard — but easy with His joy —. May all of us "deeply take and firmly keep the print of heaven."

16] keeps insisting that the
hosters return. It was fun.
Betty got our coats + we
went with them; they'd go a
little way + all bow + say
"go back" (pu sung) + we'd very
politely insist + bow + we'd
go a few more steps till
the performance was complete
3 or four times - Then we told
them goodbye. It was very
interesting. I think most of
them are Christians at least
they sang one song for us +
we could recognize "Come into
my heart Jesus".

Friday evening we have
our Christmas party + tree
+ give each other little
gifts. We drew names +
will have jokes + poems etc
I'll tell you about it

17 next time + about our Christmas day at the chow chang.

It has gotten unusually cold for this early in the year the lady told me. I have decided to buy the fur rug next week Am pondering buying a fur coat. We can get very lovely ones here for #30-40 gold. I am warm enuf for just now + with the rug I'll be I think tho I'm really planning for the country work It will most terribly cold on carts + all seem to feel a fur coat almost a necessary part of outfit- There tho seem so nice - maybe too nice to wear

19 to remember you'll get this in Jan + all Feb + Mar you'll be fearing I am cold + be able to rest — so I'll promise now to get all I need so don't worry a speck dearest ones! You'll be glad to know my room is wonderfully warm!

Sun P.M. going out to Mrs. Kok's - austrian legation - great friends of Gaforth's to tea. It is at their home that Gaforth's speak + where Mrs. G. was for so long. + Eve to supper with Gaforth's That will be nice - Tell about it later too - Now will close to get this off + maybe get a boat sooner. My precious ones how I do love you + praise our father for

18| for country wear. I may wait to write at Yuba to see what they'd advise. might be able to get something there really more suitable + made more for that than for dress as they make them here. I got so cold coming home this P.M. - a cold Siberian wind that I about decided I'd get one. The blue coat Mrs. Hayes made is fine + warm tho'!! I must write Aunt Clara how I have enjoyed that wonderful scarf these windy days - I wrap it about three times around my neck + defy the breezes. Now, don't worry about my being cold - I just happened

such parents + friends + all their love + thoughtfulness and prayers! It does just bridge the miles + you seem near and oh so dear and precious to me. I'll be eager to know of the new minister and all about your Christmas and all!

Good night precious ones - Mrs. Chafant got a cable yesterday of death of her father. Our hearts just ache for her.

Am well - have had no colds since the two in Oct + feel wonderfully well - What about you Mumsie + Daddy Sir? Be sure to tell me.

All my love -

Irene

Yen Ching School
of Chinese Studies
Dec. 30, 1924

My Own Blessed Ones:

My letter I fear will be late for I just learned that the mail for Seattle Jan 15. closes at eight a.m. down town in the morning. I've been so busy + waiting till I'd have lots of time to write + may have waited too long. It will probably go soon tho - I wish I'd know of this early sailing sooner. I was having a sleep when Mrs. Uris brought in newspaper + mentioned it.

~~Bless your dear sweet hearts~~ What a Christmas I've had! + how can I thank ~~You~~ for the sweet thoughtfulness! How I've enjoyed everything + I can't tell what

3| cedar wreaths + cedar in long rope like strings. That day Friday seemed so much like Christmas - all the girls were decorating their rooms too - we got a kind of mistletoe with red berries on it - + made little wreaths for all the doors on our corridor, Betty got a little tree for the corridor + we put our things on it - besides to be Christmas must have stockings so we each had a little red paper one hanging on the banister near the tree. They looked quite interesting + gay too.

For all in the hostels were had drawn names + each bought a 20 p present for the one whose name he had

Well has meant to me -
Letters began coming before
Christmas day. I saved almost
all to open then - all but
Eula's, Bessie & Buds, & Yours
Mumsy. Then packages
came the day after Christmas
& day after that - all
except the one in which you
mentioned was a Kodak -
it hasn't come as yet but
I expect it is down at Goffs
piled up maybe - may come
before I finish this. I almost
began at all as I wanted to
- I feel there is so much to
tell you I don't know where to
begin.

I'd better go in order — our
school party went off very
well. We had a nice big tree
beautifully decorated & with
electric lights. All the
living rooms & dining room
were festive with green

4] All assembled after Supper Christmas Eve. We had previously fixed bags with a treat for the servants. So they were all called in over 60 in all - Mr. Yuan, the man in charge of them gave them a real Christian message explaining the why etc. - Those who understood said it was excellent. Then Santa helped distribute the bags - in each was candy, peanuts, a turkish towel, cake of soap + red envelope in which was three dollars. That money was collected for them - we can't give tips to them but once a term give some. They seemed so glad to get them +

5] seeing them receive them was surely almost the best part of Christmas! Oh, that Mr. Yuan's words will change hearts + bring all to our master. Afterward we had fun with cups + reading the enclosed poems! Then Mr. Cook, an Englishman read part of Dickens "Christmas Carol" + he did it very well indeed. We had doughnuts, apples cocoa + coffee - then a devotional service to end it. As we were finishing the Salvation Army band came playing Christmas carols! It did sound good - had'nt heard a band for a long time + it was very good. We were up still later pulling moss in stockings and on the tree. Five-thirty next A.M. we

compounds & foreign homes. We each carried little glass lanterns with a candle inside - so it was quite picturesque to see the long procession. It was very dark at first - but the stars were so bright - there seemed an unusual hush & solemnity to me - my first Christmas in China, even the stars brought a new meaning as we rode along & thought of the Star & its meaning. The east later began to glow & such a glorious blazing sunrise as if Nature too insisted in proclaiming the glory of the new day for all the world. How

6 | thirty-five of language
school met in West
Hostel for a bit of coffee
from thermos bottles +
sandwiches + started on
our coral singing round!
The rickshaw men were wait-
ing — they said they had n't
slept much because they
had no time piece to know
when to be there. Dr. Forster
a cousin of Isabel's — girl
from W. Canada — + I took our
remaining sandwiches out
to the rickshaw men + they
surely were delighted with
them. It wasn't long before
all had disappeared. We
went to change + trim + sing
home to sing first + left
a basket of fruit for him
+ wife. Then to various

8] many never saw the glory - & it is true today - so many haven't seen the glory of Him whose birth we celebrate - The drabness of early dawn is still a picture of those hearts! Are we doing all we can to reflect that glory - I was thinking!

At three places they gave us coffee + sandwiches + little cakes. At one especially we had such a breakfast hot biscuits with butter all melted in them, oh!! such good little sweet things too. They were very nice to us - We gave the ricksha men a dollar - we were out five hours + made about 40% extra - They were so happy A couple of places I saved

9 a cookie for mine. See the chinese ordinarily eat twice a day between 9+10 a.m. + five or six p.m. - so ours had had nothing before we went but what we gave them. I guess to them it was nothing for them as they seem to go without food - of course that factor comes into their average life of 3½ - 5 yrs - of work. Betty didn't go so she had my bed all made + room lighted when we got back. We got warm + visited + a little after eleven I went to the chow chang (Soup kitchen) I felt that was about the best way I could spent the day. I found I was a bit

11 is the only one I can sing alone. Then I went to the home of Mrs. Smith. She insisted that I have tea + chinese candy before we went on. That was nice. I wish you could have seen the group of poor ragged, dirty, folks. There were 1700 over given food that day. They had a special treat of the day - millet which when cooked looks like thick white corn-meal mush. (this is the daily ration) a soup like a dilution of bean curd, cabbage + mutton boiled together and mutton as many are Mahammedan. It was after four when all were

10. early as Mrs. Smith had had to have a service — So there was a crowd of little dirty boys there + they always wanted to talk. I just stayed — had such fun talking to them + to one of Chinese lady workers but I couldn't understand her as well — I guess mine is no for a child's vocabulary There were two especially who help. come at the Kitchen — not beggars — + they + I had a good time. Then we four choruses of songs in characters on a chart + they undertook to teach me. So we read + sang — learned "Jesus loves Me" + several others but that

12 counted and gone. I had kept the rickshaw that day - about 5 hours altogether because I wanted to give him the dollar so he might as well pull me home too. I forgot to tell him to go on + eat that I'd be there long - When I came out he asked me if I had had anything to eat - + was so concerned when I said no. I figured out later that was because he thought we only ate twice too. Betty had waited for me + we ate Christmas dinner then. My, I thought as I came home how glad I was to have some "family" to come home to.

13 we had nice dinner of fish, bustard (a kind of wild fowl, really delicious - on the leg meat is white + on the breast is very very dark + very coarse fibered but tender. Then plum pudding with hard sauce, Then we came up to open mail + letters! + had a nice visit till supper time - The cook has real ability in decorating cakes + for that day he out-did him-self with a bell shaped top all of various kinds of candy on top. We had some at supper. Finally Christmas night we four who had the tree at last all at one time

15] to sleep hour after hour.
Mrs. Kalk of Austrian Legation
had asked me to tea but I
didn't go just slept till that
evening Dr + Mrs. Goforth's to
dinner, Mrs. G. had been out
two days in succession +
was quite well. She sat at
the table with us + felt
well enough to tell some
stories for us. They are such
a sweet couple! we did
so enjoy being there - just
like a bit of home -
Monday a.m. + all this
week I've had 2 hrs just of
conversation with a chinese
teacher + enjoyed it much.
It wasn't extra so I thought
I might as well. In the P.M.
they were having a children's

14 for the only time during the day could stop long enuf to open our things. It was nice too. I had a nice package from Yilsien with letter telling me I was wise not to have attempted coming + they sent such a pretty piece of embroidery on grass linen + tatting. Betty gave me brass pieces for clerk set and the two Margarets a framed picture of the summer palace. In our stocking were soap, hairpins, hankies, popcorn balls, fudge etc — Sunday I was weary — got up for our class + Mr. Lee called but many had gone out to their homes so did not meet. I could hardly wait for the boy to clean my room

16) meeting at the Salvation army near the chow chang - She asked if I'd come & help Mrs. Bly (a Lutheran & rooms next door) went, we played the guitar & sang a few songs which they knew in Chinese so they'd get the meaning They have a small hall & it was packed full of children & a few mothers. The clothes of all weren't immaculate but the faces of all were quite shining. I wish you could have heard them sing. My! they just fairly took off the roof! Chinese love much noise & they had it. A boy beat a big drum all the time & some of the time that was augmented

17] by three shrill phinese flutes, + baby organ + on Jesus Loves me" - we added the guitar and it was fine!! They gave special little bags to some as prizes. Then all got bags made of newspaper with little pictures + candy am not sure what else. I was talking to my little boy (the chorus teacher of a few days before) + he showed me his special sock - had a little cake of soap + pictures. He offered me his pictures but I couldn't take them - tho it was sweet of him.

That p.m. as I came in here were five packages so

19 in the least. I had such
joy opening them + thinking
of your all working together
to get them off + of the
sacrifice in all! Never have
I eaten such fruitcake +
the candy tho a little hard
was delicious. All the
things apron. pins + garters
from Mrs. S. were duly wept
over + enjoyed. I needed the
little pencil Margie insisted
I must have. — That accounts
for the boxes; the other doubt-
less is on the way. I got
one slip with duty $1.91 on
it + was sure it was the
package — but it was
my skates just come from
board. The girls got them.
The man at the post office told

18 I just had a glorious time opening them. A box of holly & book from Aletha Agelzby - wasn't that nice? a pretty blue scarf from Isabel, a book from Julia then two bestest of all from home. The divinity candy was just so soft & fine - fairly melts in your mouth - had leaked out a wee bit but not at all badly & how we've feasted on it! The girls are come to get a bit & rave over it. Thank you so & Aunt Callie for the boxes. I shall keep them for future! Then Bessie's box & it came in just great shape. The box had a couple of dints but the contents were not hurt

20 | any package under $4.00 gold valuation came duty free. However if there are several packages for one person in the same mail they add them up - so it is better to mail at diffent times. The 2 didint pay a cent on all my five that came at once - I think if you put wholesale price valuation it is allright. Some have received packages which we thought were very highly valued. I might be all right for refund but a lot were too highly valued & made duty high. Next night Marie Harrington's package came. It was valued up in

21] muslin + on the tag said "merchandise (value $3.50) sewed in muslin inspected by postmaster before sealing" Her mother is postmaster so she could do that. We've tried to find out their rules about duty + while they seem to enforce it a variety of ways what I've said he said is the rule. Tues. I thought I'd read all my mail over + found one unopened from Martha Morrison of M.C. + in a $10.00 check! The Board allowed me the $23.00 Mex for excess luggage so that with yours mumsie dear I may use to get a coat with - I'll see.

Thank you mumsie darling for the check - you shouldn't

22 It does seem queer some-
times to get answers so long
after things happen. Your answer
something about colds of act-
just comes now — but how
thankful we must be that
the letters do come so quickly.
Are Vi + Cecil still living
with Bud + Bes. they didn't
say.

Bud's surely have my answer
to that wonderful letter by now!
I'm sorry it was slow — How
I appreciate their letters + all
Earl, I haven't touched the
typewriter — it is awful but
we've all our time pretty
full — I must get at it
tho. Praise our Heavenly Father
for His loving care over Leo
and the operation and all!
I'm so glad it is out. That
was great that he could

2B have done that at all. It will exchange about 25 Mex. It can just be cashed at the bank + I guess really there is less loss on a check than any other form of transferring money. Thank you dear.

Daddy Si, just after Mother's letter came saying you had subscribed for me all those wonderful papers here came a copy of the S.S. Times. It just almost made me homesick - it had such a familiar and reminded me so vividly of my precious Daddy Si + all his love. Thank you Honey, they will be of untold value + I do appreciate them so much!!

23] be with you for Thanksgiving & for a few days. I'm glad you could have him for it would be a big help & cheer. I shall be so glad to hear of a pastor there & I just pray God will lead the man there. Daddy dear I really feel so safe in his belief whoever he will be for that I'm trusting to you. Now be sure I'll glad too Eulais are well liked. I'm thinking they better soon be sending me a picture of twins. I hope they keep them well on under discipline for now they can be pretty much trouble. I do hope they are well now!

Mumsie your letter of Nov. 28 came on Christmas day! What good mail I've had

24 from all family nearly -
& so many friends, sweet
letter Mrs Norman, Mrs. Bell,
Mrs. Hodges, ~~Sarah's~~ class -
Have just piles to answer
will do that tomorrow
some.
~~Yesterday we went pitzu~~
~~riding - I'll put that in~~
~~the hetagraph letter -~~
& I had a horseback ride
a girl here helps pay board
for the horse of a friend
& she's been using my suit
so Betty rode a long
time & I went a little
while. Sat. we expect
to go again. It was
great sport but I am
finding it a bit hard
to walk & sit today!
~~Do thank Hall's for mi~~

26/ just think my post in China — The Lord Himself has made it a very wonderful time. It is amazing but just what should be natural too the way He fills the crannies of all our lives so with His love + supplies the love + friendship just when we need it most — like on Christmas days — and gives us the peace that passeth thought with loved ones far away — and then chooses us to represent Him ah! it is a big, wonderful task! How little a fool + lair all of us need the constant

25 I'll really try to write them tho.

I'm enclosing some of the pictures of our Chinese teacher so you can get an idea how really fine they are. Betty said lots of folks in her home felt all Chinese were laundrymen + she want to prove differently!

I'll finish this now + rush over with it to the mail box. I was told late tonight they'd collect so it may get in before the mail is closed! I do hope so!

What a perfectly enjoyable Christmas this has been!

renewing of our strength from Him. I praise Him for Himself + for you blessed family. Mumsie Dear + Daddy Si my two most precious treasures how I love you + long for you. But somehow He brings us very near because we meet in Him + at His throne. God bless you + use you + guide you! Thank you more more than I can tell for all of the sweet love + Christmas cheer + gifts but most of all for you, just you my dearest parents.

"and thou shalt make them drink of the River of thy Pleasures. for with thee is the fountain of life Ps 36:8,9

Love - Irene